



Help Your Teen Deal with the Ups & Downs of Diabetes

By the [National Diabetes Education Program](#)

Teens with diabetes and their families often face unique challenges. Teens may sometimes have feelings of sadness, anger, loneliness, and fear, or they may blame themselves or their family for their diabetes. These feelings are normal every now and then. But in order to feel better, teens need to learn to take charge of their diabetes – and families can help. Parents or guardians can encourage their teens to feel good about themselves, seek support from others, and take action to manage their diabetes one step at a time. **Follow these tips from the National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP) to help your teen deal with the ups and downs of diabetes:**

- Get your whole family involved. It's easier to manage diabetes when your whole family gets involved. Serve your family healthy foods, such as a mix of colorful fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads, and low-fat meats, milk, and cheese. Make healthy snacks, like fruit, highly visible in your home and do not keep a lot of sweets, like cookies, candy, or soda around the house. Encourage your family to be more physically active by planning activities that you can do together, such as riding bikes or going for a walk. Join a community program like the Y to enjoy a variety of low-cost or free activities.
- Encourage your teen to take an active role in his or her diabetes care. Help your teen set goals. Start with small goals, such as cutting back on soda, or riding a bike a couple of times a week. Reward your teen when goals are met, and encourage your teen to make every new goal just a little bit harder.
- **Help your teen find other teens who have diabetes.** Programs and support groups for teens with diabetes can be found in clinics, health centers, and hospitals. Check your local newspaper. Ask your teen's health care team for more information. Visit www.diabetescamps.org to find diabetes or weight loss summer camps for teens with diabetes.
- **Encourage your teen to ask for help from their school and health care team.** It's important that teens tell their health care team how they feel and what they need help with to manage their diabetes. Make sure you notify your teen's school that your teen has diabetes. Provide the school staff with your teen's diabetes care plan and meet with them to help plan their diabetes care during the school day.
- **Help your teen find a counselor if he or she seems depressed.** Suggest people your teen can reach out to for help, such as a family member, friend, school counselor, teacher, doctor, diabetes educator, or psychologist. Encourage your teen to let you know when he or she is feeling down.

For a free copy of the [Tips for Teens: Dealing with the Ups & Downs of Diabetes](#) tip sheet, contact the National Diabetes Education Program at www.YourDiabetesInfo.org or call 1-888-693-NDEP (1-888-693-6337), TTY: 1-866-569-1162. The [Tips for Teens tip sheet series](#) also includes the following additional topics: [What is Diabetes?](#), [Be Active](#), [Stay at a Healthy Weight](#), and [Make Healthy Food Choices](#). Also check out [Helping the Student with Diabetes Succeed: A Guide for School Personnel](#), a resource to help students with diabetes, their health care team, school staff, and family work together to support the student with diabetes at school.

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